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James Cousins and Sherard Vines  
at Keio University: 1919–20; 1923–28\*

Part Two

William Snell

Vines, come to my house of Life. These mats I call  
Faith, first of all, would please you.  
Here is the pillar of Peace by the alcove. I believe you  
would like it, too.  
In winter you could warm your hands over the fire of  
Humanity, in which I roast the chestnuts, Tears.  
And we, you and I, will enjoy their taste and Smile.  
The wind of Adoration may blow through the house when  
summer comes;  
It would be delightful, certainly, to gaze at the storm  
whose name is Excitement . . .  
I am sorry, Vines, that I did not tell you first about  
the cook that I keep,  
Since all things in life, I know, should begin and end with  
a matter of diet.

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I will call my cook to my presence, Vines, and let him tell  
 you, with your permission, what he can cook . . .  
 Here he comes. His name, if I am not mistaken, is  
 Patience . . .  
 Patience, what was your favourite dish? Well, it was the  
 soup of Youth, wasn't it!  
 Now, Vines, come with me to my dining-room, and let  
 us drink to our glorious lives in joy and pain.

Yone Noguchi, "To Sherard Vines" (1926)<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Part One<sup>2</sup> of this paper examined James Henry Sproul Cousins (1873–1956) the Irish writer, playwright, critic, poet and theosophist, and the period he spent at Keio Gijuku University, where he held a brief professorship from 1919–20. Part Two will look at Walter Sherard Vines, novelist, critic and poet, who was associated with the Bloomsbury Group and went on to become the first G. F. Grant Professor of English at the University of Hull in 1929. Vines taught at Keio for five years from 1923 to 1928. Herein we will consider his affiliation with Keio, and his writings both in and on Japan: in particular his travel book *Yofuku, or, Japan in Trousers* (1931), and the novel he published in 1928, *Humours Unreconciled: A Tale of Modern Japan*, which is a scathing satire on the expatriate community in Tokyo in the 1920s.

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1 Prefatory verse to Sherard Vines, *The Pyramid*. London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, 1926, p. vii.

2 See *The Hiyoshi Review of English Studies*, No. 49 (2006): 129–146.

Walter Sherard Vines (1890–1964) was born in Oxford and educated at Magdalen College School and New College<sup>3</sup>, where his father (Sydney Howard Vines, 1850–1934) held the Sherardian chair of botany at the University, naming his son after its founder. Subsequently Vines appears to have studied Phonetics in Berlin and Art History in Munich. From 1910 to 1914 Vines became editor of and published in *Oxford Poetry*, while also giving lectures at Toynbee Hall in London’s East End on “The Growth of the Romantics”. He left a lectureship at Belfast University<sup>4</sup> with the outbreak of war in 1914, applying for active service in the Highland Light Infantry. After being wounded in 1917, he was invalided out of the army.

In 1923, at the invitation of Junsaburo Nishiwaki, Vines came to lecture full-time at Keio. Nishiwaki (1894–1982), Professor of English Literature at Keio from 1925, met Vines on a one-year stay in England and enrolled at New College in October of 1923 where he studied Old and Middle English. Among other prominent authors and poets Vines introduced him to was John Collier.<sup>5</sup> Nishiwaki was essentially a philologist but became better known as a great modernist poet, later translating some of Vines’ works into Japanese (see **Appendix**).<sup>6</sup> As the late Keio professor Mikio Hiramatsu observes,

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3 *Mita Bungaku*, February 1923: 135.

4 Margaret ‘Espinasse, “Obituary: Emeritus Professor W. S. Vines” *Gazette*, University of Hull, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Autumn 1974): 44–45: 44. Queen’s University Belfast is, however, unable to verify this.

5 John Henry Collier (1901–1980), British-born writer best known for his short stories, many of which appeared in the *New Yorker* during the thirties, forties and fifties. See *Fukuiku Taru Kafu-yo: Seitan 100 nen Nishiwaki Junzaburo sono shi to kaiga*. [Born 100 years ago, the poetry and pictures of Nishiwaki Junzaburo] (Yokohama: Kanagawa Kindai Bungakukan, 1994), p. 20. Collier is also noted for writing the first-draft script of John Huston’s 1951 film *The African Queen*.

6 Shinichi Kawauchi (1899–1978) also translated several poems from *The Kaleidoscope* in *Mita Bungaku* (January, 1924) as well as an essay by Vines in the

Vines arrived in Japan in 1923 at the same time as the poet Edmund Blunden, who had been invited to teach at the Imperial University of Tokyo. Vines also became a tutor to Prince Chichibu,<sup>7</sup> brother of the Showa Emperor, who was at Magdalen College, Oxford, for two years from 1925. From Hiramatsu, who was a student of Vines,<sup>8</sup> we can also know how much, or rather how well, he was paid at Keio:

I remember being told by a school official, as a reporter of the student paper, that he was to be paid ten thousand yen a year, twice as much as the highest salary of Japanese professors. (At that date, U.S. one dollar was about two yen, and one pound was ten yen or so.)<sup>9</sup>

Hiramatsu's recollection ends on a poignant note:

At the time of the Queen's Coronation in 1952, while I was staying in London... I received a letter from [Vines] saying that he had been living in Ireland since his retirement from the University [of Hull] and hoped

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February 1928 issue of *Mita Bungaku* remembering the novelist Thomas Hardy, who died in January of that year.

- 7 Cf. G. R. T. Owst (1895–1962, first Professor of Education at Cambridge: 1938–59), who tutored the prince in 1925–26 according to his dedication in *Preaching in Medieval England* (C.U.P., 1926).
- 8 Hiramatsu Mikio, “Reminiscence” in Masao Hirai and Peter Milward eds. *Edmund Blunden: a tribute from Japan* (Kenkyusha: Tokyo, 1974), pp. 47–64; p. 52. Hiramatsu (1903–1996) was a professor in Keio's Faculty of Science and Technology from 1941 and both a regular contributor of short stories and literary criticism to *Mita Bungaku* in the pre-war years and member of the editorial committee. He founded the Japan Society of Translators (1954), and both wrote about and translated Australian literature.
- 9 Hiramatsu, p. 57.

to have an opportunity of reunion. (I was told by Blunden that Vine's address in Ireland was also his wife's hometown.) It was a matter of great regret to me that I missed him then and never met him again.<sup>10</sup>

### **Vines the Poet**

As mentioned above, before coming to Japan Vines had already published poetry, notably in *Oxford Poetry* and also in Edith Sitwell's *Wheels* anthologies between 1917 and 1921 along with such distinguished literary figures as Sacheverell and Osbert Sitwell, Aldous Huxley, and (in 1919) Wilfred Owen. Osbert Sitwell recalls:

The younger poets in whose work he [Sir Edmund Gosse: 1849?–1928, English poet, author and critic] took an interest were well exemplified in a reading, organized on behalf of some charity by the late Robert Ross and Madame Vandervelde, in the autumn of 1917. It was held at the house of Lady Colefax in South Kensington — Onslow Square, if I am not mistaken. Gosse was in the chair, and the poets who were invited to read their own poetry were, so far as I remember, Robert Graves, the late Robert Nichols, Siegfried Sassoon, Irene Rutherford McLeod, Sherard Vines, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Edith Sitwell and myself [Osbert Sitwell]. Sassoon failed to materialise; but the others were there.<sup>11</sup> [emphasis mine]

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10 Hiramatsu, p. 53.

11 Osbert Sitwell, *Noble Essences or Courteous Revelations*, p. 39. Victoria Glendinning, in her biography of Edith Sitwell, writes: "Recurring names in the early cycles of *Wheels* are Iris Tree ... Sherard Vines, and Arnold James, as well as Guevara, Nancy Cunard, Huxley, Helen Rootham... and all three Sitwells. The fourth cycle — November 1919 — was dedicated to the memory of Wilfred Owen

Vines had also produced a volume of poetry prior to leaving England, *The Kaleidoscope. Poems for the people* (1920), but it appears that Blunden was incremental in getting his second collection, *The Pyramid* (1926), into print: he suggested to his friend Richard Cobden-Sanderson, who set up as a publisher in Thavies Inn, London, that he consider the work by “a lively young poet of the Sitwellian tint” whose poems he considered as “modern & ... masterfully, full of novel poetic motives and splendid imaginations.”<sup>12</sup> Son of the printer Thomas Cobden-Sanderson, who had known William Morris and Burne-Jones, Cobden-Sanderson was Blunden’s main publisher from 1920 and during the latter’s period in Japan, 1924–1927, published in all eighteen of Blunden’s books.<sup>13</sup> Vines’ collection *The Pyramid* (1926) contains prefatory verses by Edmund Blunden and Yone Noguchi, and he published a further volume, *Triforium* (1928), through the same publisher, including verses which appeared in Keio’s *Mita Bungaku*. The *British Times Literary Supplement* reviewed *The Pyramid* as follows:

His [Vines’] despair is significant because it is so intellectually positive. ... His verse is remarkable for the piercing violence with which it expresses the disenchantment of one for whom the world has become divested of value!<sup>14</sup>

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(unfortunately spelt “Wilfid” on the title page) and contains seven of his poems.” *Edith Sitwell: A Unicorn Among Lions*, p. 61.

12 Miriam J. Benkovitz, “Edmund Blunden and the Incitements of Japan” in *Books at Iowa* 32 (April 1980); her Note 19 adds: “EB to Cobden-Anderson, Tokyo, June 3, 1925, August 28, 1925, and January 18, 1925.”

13 Barry Webb, *Edmund Blunden: A Biography* (Yale U.P., 1990), p. 235.

14 Quoted on the dust cover of *Humours Unreconciled* (1928).

While in Japan, Vines also contributed short stories to Blunden's short-lived journal, *The Oriental Literary Times* (it seemingly only ran to one volume, from 1924 to 1925, with 6 issues), and although Vines was himself in no way a 'war poet' his experience in the so-called 'Great War' and his literary interests would have drawn the two men together.<sup>15</sup> One of his better known and more accessible poems reflects the cynicism of Wilfred Owen in many respects. Among the poems published in *The Pyramid* (1926), is "War Commemoration:1925":

To-DAY we must recall abysmal follies  
That have bequeathed our friends to flies and sour clay,  
That bent the air with groaning flights of steel  
Or sweetened it with a shell's livid breath,  
Turned wholesome plains and gentle lakes to filth,  
Tore up our continent in unscavenged belts  
Through cross-edged meadows and afforested heights  
Where the guns crouched in pits and shouted  
Lunatic judgement in dull obedience.  
We must remember the weary standing-to  
Of millions, pale in corpse-infected mist,  
The mad, and those turned monsters, or castrated  
In one red, hideous moment; and how, unseen  
Dark Mania sat in offices, and designed  
New schemes for shambles, learning year by year,  
Painfully, secretly, to degrade the world.<sup>16</sup>

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15 Indeed, Blunden was working on his war memoir *Undertones of War* during 1924.

16 *The Pyramid*, p. 28.



In addition to Blunden, South African author William Plomer (1903–1973) who spent the period between 1926 and 1929 in Japan, also became acquainted with Vines, as he records in his memoir *Double Lives*:

I was on friendly terms with several English married couples and with an Englishwoman married to a Japanese, and among my chief blessings in those days I count the society of two Europeans in particular. First, the witty and learned Sherard Vines, a poet of distinction (neglected, in my opinion, by a reading public too easily hypnotized by the parrot-like repetition of names and too incurious to find things out for itself), and author of *Yofuku*, a markedly original book on Japan, of *The Course of English Classicism*, and of a satirical novel, *Green to Amber*, which gives a scintillating picture of English provincial life just before Munich....<sup>17</sup>

Peter Alexander in his biography of Plomer describes Vines as “a witty, learned man”, and speculates that he was introduced to Plomer by Blunden. Though Vines is now largely forgotten as a poet, Plomer evidently thought highly of his work, noting that “his writing is marked by neo-metaphysical conceits and the piling up of recondite detail”. It was Vines who, on his return to Europe in June 1928, carried with him the first of Plomer’s writings on Japan to be published, *Paper Houses*, which Leonard and Virginia Woolf’s Hogarth Press brought out in 1929, and which the author dedicated to Vines.<sup>18</sup> Another link with Vines was that while Plomer was resident in

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17 William Plomer, *Double Lives: an autobiography* (1943), p. 226.

18 Alexander, p. 143; Vines’ *The Course of English Classicism: from the Tudor to the*

Kami Neruma, Tokyo, he had Yone Noguchi as a neighbour, whom he recalls was “a lean and sardonic-looking person, rather like a Spaniard, who had an air of having burnt his candles at both ends.”<sup>19</sup> He goes on to relate about Noguchi’s time in California when a “burly Californian, who, presumably to show his racial antipathies, spat in Noguchi’s face — an attack as unexpected as that on Pearl Harbour in 1941,” but describes the Japanese poet’s verses as being “in a bizarre English of his own.”

Among other things, Vines’ Georgian sense of wit might well have drawn the two men to each other. As observed in **Part One** of this paper, the Japanese poet and professor of English Literature at Keio from 1905 was instrumental in bringing visiting scholars from abroad together; he also became the subject of a biography which Vines wrote and which was translated into Japanese: *Yone Noguchi: A Critical Study* (1925). Father of the sculptor Isamu Noguchi, he later became a staunch supporter of the Japanese role in the Pacific war, but before that his relationship with Vines would probably have evaporated. As an aside, Vines later acknowledged Noguchi, if only in passing, in his *100 Years of English Literature* (1950) in a chapter on “Travel”:

Among the unscientific travellers in Asia was Rudyard Kipling, whose *Letters of Marque* (1891) were reprinted in *From Sea to Sea* (1900). Here is the very observant journalist, vigilant for the characteristic — for example, the chronic nose-running of Japanese children, about which Yone Noguchi wrote a poem...<sup>20</sup>

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*Victorian Age*, was published by the Hogarth Press in 1930.

19 *Double Lives*, p. 241.

20 *100 Years of English Literature*, p. 128.

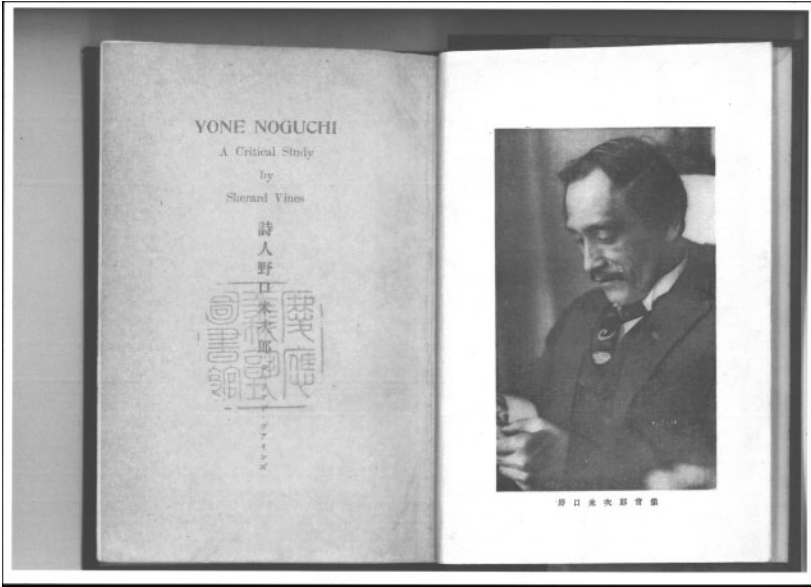


Fig. Frontispiece to Vines' book on Noguchi 「詩人野口米次郎」 1925

### *Humours Unreconciled and Yofuku*

Sherard Vines' novel *Humours Unreconciled: A tale of Modern Japan*, and his travel book *Yofuku, or, Japan in Trousers*, which came out in London three years later in 1931, are interesting to read in light of each other. Numerous parallels if not self-poaching are evident. The latter book is pertinent for containing several references by the author to his time at Keio. *Yofuku* consists of nine chapters, including those on "Diet and Hygiene", "Of Manners and Morals", "Men, Women and Children", "Belief, Education and Culture", "Local Colour", and "To-day and To-morrow". *Yofuku* begins with a chapter entitled "The Tyro Lands" and an interesting observation on the impressions of those who visit Japan for a short time and those who arrive in the country intending to stay for a longer period:

A tourist — an American — once spent a few weeks in this country, after which he returned and wrote a book called “Mysterious Japan,” steeped in all the glamour of the picture-postcard and the Japonaiserie used to colour advertisement pamphlets issued by shipping companies and travel bureaus.<sup>21</sup>

The American referred to is undoubtedly Julian Street (1879–1947) author of *Mysterious Japan* (London, 1923). Yet in *Yofuku* Vines presents a fairly jaundiced picture of the Japanese and Japan. Like many other similar works by other visitors to the country, *Yofuku* examines the oddities, irritations (such as spitting and the noisy use of spittoons), and eccentricities of the Japanese shared by many travelogues. He refers to Japanese sanitation (“The rat of Mr. Eliot’s *Waste Land* would find itself much more at home here with millions of companions” p. 47), habits (“All liquids must be supped audibly, solids inhaled with an industrious noise of suction, followed by a luscious smacking of the lips, and then, ‘si bene ructavit,’ your patriot resorts to his toothpick” p. 53), and makes disparaging observations on food and drink, from disgust at the butter (“By false analogy they conclude that butter must be rancid if it is to be the real thing, and manufacture a festering oleaginous mass of which they partake freely...” p. 27),<sup>22</sup> and the peculiarity of certain native brands of alcohol. In one section, Vines comments on the misuse of foreign languages by the Japanese “especially in the sphere of commerce”.<sup>23</sup>

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21 *Yofuku, or, Japan in Trousers*, p. 1.

22 In *Humours...* p.158, Professor McGonigle’s maidservant, O-Natsu-san, is described as having developed “a curious taste in the soapy chocolate creams manufactured by Morinaga, the Tamachi Candy King...”.

23 For example “...a much-advertised synthetic non-intoxicant drink, for which the unfortunate name of ‘Calpis’ has been selected.” pp. 30–31.

Plus ça change! Plomer, in his autobiographical *Double Lives*, relates how “My friend Sherard Vines discovered some alleged whisky labeled ‘Rabbit Brand, as supplied to the Nobleman’ — the Nobleman’s opinion was unfortunately not recorded — ”.<sup>24</sup> This is verified by Vines:

The brands of Japanese Scotch whisky are as numerous as [they are] deadly; some of them are even sold in bottles that have contained the genuine article.... But when the labels are designed here, some careless mistakes in English, which go to prove that the Japanese are incorrigible impressionists, inevitably give the show away; and the Tyro immediately rejects “The Very Old Best Scotch Whisky, distilled by McY. & Co.” (that historic clan), or “Rabbit Brand, supplied to all Noble Family.” (*Yofuku*, pp. 30–31)<sup>25</sup>

As evidence that in some respects things have altered little since the 1920s, even then men sitting on the train or wherever were “inclined to use their shoulders as a pillow, and show signs of resentment when his head is pushed away forcibly enough to close his gaping mouth” (p. 55). Suicide, and the Japanese proclivity for resorting to it, is a matter on which many foreign commentators have remarked, and is one which features in Plomer’s, Vines’ and other travelogues. Vines writes that the Japanese are “a people...

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24 Plomer adds, “I long treasured the label from a proprietary brand of soy, got up to look like Worcester Sauce. The inscription on the label was partly in French, but copied from a bottle of hair oil, so one learnt with surprise that the consumption of this delicious sauce, containing the choicest oriental spices, would not only remove undesirable *petticules* from one’s *chevelure*, but would impart to it suppleness, brilliance and an agreeable perfume.” (*Double Lives*, p. 222)

25 In *Humours Unreconciled* Vines writes of “the imitation Worcester sauce which, as the label informs one, is ‘Recipe of Noble Countryman’.” (p. 153)

one of the Japanese characters, declares. He earlier observes that “Japanese little man. Not so good for love, good for war. Beeg Engleeshman the fine target, red face very easy to shoot. Little Japanese... very deef-cult to shoot. Modern warfare for little man, no more Anglo-Saxon Soup-erioritee.” (p. 66)

Despite the mordant tone of *Yofuku*, and how disparaging Vines appears to be about Japan, the book contains several remarks about Keio which reveal his admiration for the institution; some perhaps as pertinent today as they were in the 1920s. On the students he remarks: “The Japanese student is personally as a rule most charming, and sometimes a trifle pathetic; like the mules mentioned in Army Council Instructions (I forget the number) he responds readily to kind treatment...” (*Yofuku*, p. 153). In his chapter “Of Manners and Morals,” Vines refers to the attitude of Japanese towards the foreigner:

There are Japanese who look upon foreigners as fair prey; but there are at least two more honest categories; that of the old-style patriot-reactionary who regards the Westerner as a pale-haired devil whom he would have carved up by Ronin, or wandering swordsman, as was actually done just before the Restoration, were it now possible.... (*Yofuku*, p. 52)

However, in his own case he states that at Keio, amongst his Japanese colleagues, he came across “de-insularised ‘pro-foreign’” liberals, who genuinely admired foreign culture and were “genuinely ready to welcome the stranger”:

I was very fortunate in having to associate with many members of this latter class at Keio University, which is the very cradle of enlightened “occidentalism”; there were also a few of the anti-foreign die-hards, whom one respected, as being good fellows “at bottom” — a phrase for which students of English have a deep affection and many remarkable variants... (Yofuku, pp. 52–3)

Among Vine’s closer Japanese “de-insularised” colleagues Eishiro Hori must have ranked highly. He who owned a cottage at Chigasaki<sup>27</sup> where Blunden visited, and collaborated with Vines on a number of textbooks (see **Appendix**). In Blunden’s correspondence is to be found a letter dated 5 September, 1925, which alludes to his participation in a series of poetry selections for Japanese readers to be edited by Vines and Hori.<sup>28</sup>

In one interesting passage of *Humours Unreconciled*, Vines describes the character of Dr. Harada, president of the Taisho University, in the very terms of “enlightened occidentalism” he associated with Keio: “He believed in the League of Nations, the reduction of armaments, the English language and jury system, in universal and feminine suffrage, and in self determination.” (p. 154) Earlier, Vines mentions him as:

...one of the most brilliant men [who] has one of the prettiest wives in Japan... [who] sacked Moss, who was teaching “conversation”, I should rather say with Paul and Menander, “evil communications”, in the Middle School attached to [the university], for gross incompetence

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27 Where Blunden probably wrote his poem “The Cottage at Chigasaki, 1933.”

28 Okada Sumie, *Edmund Blunden and Japan: The History of a Relationship* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 100.

and drunkenness in the class-room. Formerly Japanese schools were over-run with “Professors” of the Moss type; sea cooks, naval deserters, business failures, turned their dishonest penny by murdering English... It’s funny, now; disgruntled Europeans say that the Japanese are like monkeys and that they’re cheats; but here’s a bouncing baboon of an Englishman who manages to impose on the whole of the local intelligentsia. It shows how ready they are, poor things, to accept anything that looks like Western culture.... (*Humours Unreconciled*, p. 108)

In *Yofuku* he maintains the same sentiments, reviling unscrupulous foreign teachers of English in the country: “Professor Yone Noguchi, in his autobiography, tells us how he was taught as a child by a rum-sodden old seaman who was just literate enough to stumble through sentences like “see the man and the dog,” for the benefit of little boys who knew no better” (p. 120) and vilifies the “large body of ‘pseudo-professors’ whose pretense is less discernable, and for that reason, educationally more harmful” than the aforementioned sailor.

These have taken to teaching English, not because they are qualified, but because trade has been bad, or wages low, or office-life distasteful, or because, being out of a job, they fancied they ‘were in for a soft thing.’ And a soft thing it may be for them; one of them boasted that he had made a thousand *yen* (£200) a month by teaching, but never opened a book or prepared a lesson.”

On architecture in Japan, Vines observes that “Keio University contains one of the few large ambitious essays in the Gothic, with some remarkable



and interesting modifications in the way of depressed arches and gaping tracery — a reply, one might fancy, to the Pagoda at Kew [Gardens]...” (p. 194)<sup>29</sup>

Vines states that at Keio “Economics is the most popular subject” and hopes that “the wisdom there disseminated may bear fruition in the shape of sound national finance and commerce” (p. 155). However, he notes the popularity of Marxist thought and how the government has “long been conducting a campaign against students and professors of economics, politics, and kindred spirits; student societies have been broken up; there have been police interrogations, arrests, imprisonments...” and he goes on to make mention of the murder of the prominent anarchist Sakae Osugi (1885–1923) which was also referred to by Bertrand Russell, who came to Japan in the 1920s, in his *Autobiography* as well as featuring in one of Plomer’s short stories.<sup>30</sup>

In *Yofuku*, Vines already displays that less satirical than caustic (Georgian?) wit which was later to be used to advantage in his novel about English life in the late thirties, *Green to Amber* (1941). And yet the work ends in fond reminiscence: “Recollecting in tranquility the treatment one

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29 Cf. the observation of Major R. C. V. Bodley, who taught at Keio for five months in the 1930s, in *A Japanese Omelette* (1933): “Keio University... at first sight suggests architecturally a college at Oxford or Cambridge...” (p. 157).

30 “...the ugly incident, in 1923, of Captain A.[Amakasu] of the Gendarmerie, who called on a socialist writer, and strangled him, his wife, and child [sic.], by means of a ‘Judo’ (ju-jitsu) hold. Captain A. was then imprisoned for a short while and let out by the back door.” *Yofuku*, p. 155. Plomer, in his short story “A Brutal Sentimentalist”, relates the death of Osugi (*Paper Houses* pp. 98–101). See also William Snell, “Bertrand Russell at Keio University, July 1921” *Kindai Nihon Kenkyu* 14 (1997): 171–192; 174.

idealized as the cleanest and politest people in the world” and yet “whose chief amusement is to disembowel themselves from strictly honourable motives.”<sup>26</sup>

Suicide also features prominently in Vines’ novel *Humours Unreconciled*, published in 1928 and probably written while Vines was in Japan, which is a satire on the expatriate community in Japan and tells the tale of an extra-marital affair and murder disguised as suicide: to quote one of the characters, “The little yellow brother finds it easier to die than the European, and by Jove, he does too. He jumps down chasms and eviscerates himself on pretexts that seem slight to us...” (p. 51). Containing wonderful names like Mr. (James Pugin Aloysius) Podler, Mr. Kurrie-Lewer, Tristram and Alba Sheepshanks, Mrs. Furtwaengler and Miss Bugbird, not to mention places such as “The Takai Hotel”, the book also includes some moments of great wit:

The Sheepshanks’s cook had ideas on the subject of foreign food, derived mostly from a Japanese domestic economy magazine which translated with only moderate accuracy the ‘home hints’ columns of American periodicals. All foreigners, she argued, must eat the same kind of thing, because their faces all looked the same; and she devoutly believed, blinding herself with the blinkers of faith, that they all had red hair. (*Humours Unreconciled*, p. 209)

Writing in 1928, Vines is already predicting another major international conflict: “There will soon be another war to end war, and Japan he comes out a top dog. Our people not really so democratic...” as Mr. Takamatsu,

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26 *Yofuku*, p. 4.

had received at the hands of this entertaining, curiously attractive, and all too human people...”<sup>31</sup> Judging from the book, however, we can assume that Vines did not entirely enjoy his sojourn in Japan and left with a particularly jaundiced view of the country and its people. All in all, when we compare the two works, the earlier novel *Humours Unreconciled* appears to be more sympathetic to the Japanese on the whole, perhaps because it was written before Vines’ view of Japan had become jaded, or simply because he could be more judgmental afforded the privilege of hindsight. At the end of the novel, the character Sheepshanks’ conscience speaks to him and confronts him with Podler’s murder:

“... why, may I ask, did you not commit suicide according to plan, instead of sacrificing Podler and spoiling a truly passionate, if not very noble or creditable love affair. Why did you not make a greater effort to control your savage instincts? You find fault with the fierce and licentious conduct of Japanese rustics at a Matsuri; but you, who profess to be of a superior race, are worse yourself.”

Yet finally, he justifies himself:

“How can a man foretell his deportment on the field of battle? Theory will be the first thing to go overboard. I don’t consider myself to be of a superior race; I recognise now that all men are about equally beastly, equally near the marsh of animality — with a few individual exceptions...” *(Humours Unreconciled, p. 308)*

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31 *Yofuku*, p. 218.

### **Conclusion: And who may Vines have been?**

One of the two stories Sherard Vines published in Blunden's short-lived *The Oriental Literary Times*, Vol.1 No. 3. (Feb. 15th, 1925), "Also Ran", reads with an underlying sense of autobiography. Vines may have perhaps sensed that he himself, like the story's protagonist William Colvin, would never receive the popular literary acclaim that he sought in life "not famous but forestalled" as the narrator comments when he goes to London<sup>32</sup> where he becomes "bitterer and obscurer than ever" (p. 67). The character Colvin is one of those "bright young men at Oxford in 1914" who publishes a book of verse "shortly before graduating" (p. 65), is invalidated out of the army, goes to sea "to pursue those cosmic and elemental forces that integrate themselves in ponderous cold winter waves and snorting marine creatures; to be alone with the wild beasts in the desert, to find the soul of the world..." (p. 68) in an effort to write some great travelogue, only of course to be preempted yet again:

I was present when the all unconscious Bertie Flint handed him across a restaurant table Stephen Macgregor's epic "Blazing Walrus", in which the cosmic and elemental forces integrated themselves in ponderous cold winter waves and snorting marine creatures, etc. I saw, as I read, his heartbreak... ("Also Ran", p. 68)

Colvin becomes thenceforth, "the Wondering Jew of Letters":

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32 Again Vines is typically sardonic in his choice of names: Miss Skipwith, Lady Propylene, Lady Waterworks, Mrs. Anzac, etc.

Next, [Sic.] year when he died suddenly of exophthalmic goiter, someone put an obituary notice in the Times with the motto “Beyond these voices”. It was melancholy to reflect how scarcely audible among them was his own poor tentative piping. The notice was one day shown by a charitable person to Mr. Solan, with the words “poor Colvin, his troubles over.” “Indeed?” replied Mr. Solan, “Colvin, Colvin and who may Colvin have been?” (“Also Ran”, p. 69)

As to whom Vines may have been, perhaps the best glimpse into his character is afforded by his own 1974 obituary notice:

Sherard Vines was unostentatious and reticent, but his gentle remoteness of manner did not hinder those who came to know him from recognizing his distinction. His knowledge of painting and music (he was a good pianist, too — and a talented doodler) was scarcely less than his knowledge of literature, which was immense; his taste and acumen were equal to his information; and his natural perception of inter-relation of the arts very frequently threw a new light on the subject under consideration.

The notice continues:

His style of writing, as in lecturing, was elegant and witty, with an agreeable tendency to satire. With students, however, and junior colleagues he was constantly kind: generous in praise and helpful in offering suggestions, but making no effort to impose his own opinion — a trait which is rarer in academic teachers than we perhaps imagine.

The eulogy notes that Vines was, like his father, “an ardent botanist” and a dedicated gardener, and that he settled in Cobh, Ireland, in — to quote Vines himself — “the midst of agarics” where he found a house with a luxuriant garden “which, having run completely wild, sports hares.” It ends with one lasting impression preserved by the obituarist:

One’s memory retains an impression that this [Sic. his?] house... was in some respects as unusual as its owner. For instance, the dining-room chairs were upholstered in an attractive tartan which was reported to be that of the Highland Light Infantry in which he served [during the First World War]. Whether this had been done as an act of homage or in levity or for aesthetic reasons only, was never quite clear.

This essay was intended to provide an introduction to Sherard Vines; hopefully, someone will at some point later add more to our knowledge of the man, his writings, and the period he spent in Japan in the 1920s and at Keio University.

### **Postscript**

*The Times*, Sept. 10, 1923 p. 14: “**The Earthquake.** News Of British Residents. Further Lists Of Saved, Killed, And Missing.” Notes among the missing, “Professor W. S. Vines of the Keiogiguku [Sic.] University, Tokyo, wife, and child. — Probably at Hakone during the earthquake.”

*The Times*, Saturday, Aug. 11, 1928 p. 9; “**Death Of Professor Lee Nichols.** Notes that “Professor Nichols, Professor Lee Nichols, who was on his way to Yokohama, died of cholera on board the P. and O. liner Naldera when four hours out of Penang... Professor Nichols was on his way to take up the Chair of English Literature, which has just been vacated by Mr. Sherard Vines.”

## Appendix: Works by Walter Sherard Vines

(This list, while not exhaustive, contains his principle publications)

*The Two Worlds*. (Adventurers All: a series of young poets unknown to fame; no. 6) B. H. Blackwell, 1916.

*The Dark Way*. London: Heath Cranton, 1919.

*The Kaleidoscope. Poems for the people*. London: C. W. Daniel, 1920.

*English Stories of To-day*, compiled and annotated by Walter Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1924.

*Across the Plains and Other Essays* by R. L. Stevenson; with introduction and notes by Walter Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1925.

*Island Nights Entertainments* by R. L. Stevenson; with introduction and notes by Walter Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1925.

*The Country of the Blind and Other Stories*, with introduction and notes by Walter Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1925. (Sanseido's college English readings)

*The Innocence of Father Brown* by G. K. Chesterton; notes by Walter Sherard Vines & Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1925.

*The Juryman and Other Stories* by John Galsworthy; with introduction and notes by Walter Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Sanseido, 1925.

『詩人野口米次郎』シエラアド・ヴァインズ著，第一書房，1925年。(English title: *Yone Noguchi: A Critical Study*)

*The Pyramid* [poems]; with prefatory verses by Edmund Blunden and Yone Noguchi. R. Cobden-Sanderson, 1926. [Two poems from this collection were published in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition (1931) of *The Bookman Treasury of Living Poets* (London: Hodder & Stoughton) along with two poems by Plomer]

*How to Make the Best of Life and The Human Machine* by Arnold Bennett; edited with notes by W. Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1927; 1930. (Kenkyusha English texts)

*Familiar English Speech: with intonation marks and phonetic transcript* by Sherard Vines and Eishiro Hori. Tokyo: Kanazashi Horyudo, 1927.

*Movements in Modern English Poetry and Prose*; with an introductory note by G. S.

- Gordon. Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press; Ohkayama Publishing Co.: Tokyo, 1927; Folcroft Library Editions, 1970.
- Triforium* (1928) [poems] London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1928. (Including verses which appeared in *Mita Bungaku* and *The Decachord*, a magazine that ran from (1924–31)
- A Basic Guide to English Composition* by Sherard Vines and G. B. Sansom. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1928.
- Humours Unreconciled: a tale of modern Japan*. [a novel] London: Wishart, 1928.
- Georgian Satirists*. London: Wishart, 1934.
- The Course of English Classicism from the Tudor to the Victorian Age*. Leonard & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1930. (Hogarth lectures on literature; no. 12); Phaeton Press, 1968; later translated into Japanese: 「古典主義」シェラード・ヴァインズ [著]; 三留久雄譯, 研究社, 1934年。(文學論パンフレット 斎藤勇編輯; 20)
- Yofuku, or, Japan in Trousers* [travel book] London: Wishart, 1931.
- Return, Belphegor!* [a novel] London: Wishart, 1932.
- Whips & Scorpions: specimens of modern satiric verse 1914–1931* collected by Sherard Vines. London: Wishart, 1932.
- Green to Amber*. [a novel] London: Jonathan Cape, 1940.
- Antony and Cleopatra*, edited by A. E. Eustace and W. S. Vines. The Warwick Shakespeare (c.1940?)
- Love's Labour's Lost*, edited by A. E. Morgan and W. Sherard Vines. The Warwick Shakespeare. Blackie and Son (c.1940?)
- 100 Years of English Literature*. Duckworth, 1950 (Duckworth's 100 years series); reissued as *A Hundred Years of English Literature, 1840–1940* Collier Books, 1962.

### **Other: Short Stories and Essays:**

- “Also Ran” in *The Oriental Literary Times* (Tokyo: The Japan Times), Vol. I, No. 3 (15 Feb., 1925): 65–68.
- “A Night's Tragedy” in *The Oriental Literary Times* (Tokyo: The Japan Times), Vol. I,



No. 6 (1 April, 1925): 170–75. [The final issue]

“Some Speculations on the Modern English Novel” in *Mita Bungaku* (April, 1925): 125–29.

「思い出のトマス・ハーディ」 [Thomas Hardy Remembered] in *Mita Bungaku* (Feb., 1928): 85–87. (Translated by Shinichi Kawauchi)

“The Three Sitwells” in *Scrutinies* Vol. 2 (by various writers); collected by Edgell Rickword. London: Wishart, 1928.

### **Contributions to *Oxford Poetry*, of which Vines was editor from 1910–13 and 1914:**

1910–13: “Flood Burial”; “Mud”; “Tod als Freund”; “Hotel”; “A Song of Three Nights”; “I will lift up Mine Eyes”; “The Road’s Enough”

1914: “A Song for To-morrow”; “The Forsaken Lover”; “Waiting”; “To the River Villager”

1915: “The Lover made Light by Circumstance”; “Modern Beauty”; “On Tiring of a Certain Subject”

1916: “Song of the Elm”; “Summer Near Tower Bridge”; “Epiphany”

1918: “Permission”; “Summer”

Source: <<http://www.gnelson.demon.co.uk/oxpoetry/index/iv.html>>

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- *At Home: memoirs*. London: J. Cape, 1958.
- *Double Lives: an autobiography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1950.
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- Sitwell, Osbert. *Noble Essences or Courteous Revelations: Being a book of characters and the fifth and last volume of Left Hand, Right Hand!* London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1950.
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